

# Burlington Aging Council – Creating a Plan

**Mission:** To understand the opportunities and challenges facing all older community members, and to recommend policies and programs that respect and empower all older Burlington community members, to ensure and expand their quality of life.

## Organizing our Work

1/18/2021 –Working Groups (**convenor**)

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<b>Age Friendly Communities WHO Designation &amp; BAC Planning Framework</b>	
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## Recommendations on Planning Effort – February – June 2022

(Glenn McRae, Jane Catton, Kelly Stoddard Poor)

- Goals:**
- (a) Produce an Aging Plan for the City as a guide to policy and program development.
  - (b) Provide ongoing information and recommendations to the Administration and City Council
  - (c) Provide opportunities for older residents to voice concerns, offer recommendations, and have an active role in the future of building a more livable city.

### I. Age Friendly Cities

In January the Council briefly discussed the WHO Age Friendly Network and Designation as a possible guide to planning. It was pointed out that the State of Vermont is exploring a state designation to provide resources to all communities.

**Recommendation:** Members of the Council working on this state effort should keep the Council updated and the Council should review this again in late 2022. (<https://extranet.who.int/agefriendlyworld/>)

**Recommendation:** Council members should review the AARP resources on Age Friendly Communities if they have not already done so. <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/>

**Recommendation:** Council members should review the Vermont State Plan on Aging to ensure policy and program recommendations delivered to the Mayor and City Council align with state goals to support older adults. [http://www.advancingstates.org/sites/default/files/Vermont %20State%20Plan%20on%20Aging\\_2018\\_FINAL%20APPROVED.pdf](http://www.advancingstates.org/sites/default/files/Vermont%20State%20Plan%20on%20Aging_2018_FINAL%20APPROVED.pdf). Note this plan is currently being updated.

### II. Outreach

While a great deal of information has been gathered in the past on the needs and interests of older residents in Burlington the Council supports increased efforts and opportunities.

**Recommendation:** Gather an inventory of City Department outreach and survey efforts for 2022; ensure that specific steps are made to engage older residents; ensure that questions and information gathered include concerns, interests, gaps, and opportunities for older residents. Have that information made available to the Council in a timely fashion.

**Recommendation:** AARP-VT is going to field a state-wide survey (Spring 22) to gather data on current status, needs, interests, and opportunities of older residents. They are willing to pull out Burlington data and make it available to the Council. The Council, its members, and the City will support a campaign to increase participation of older residents in Burlington and make sure that surveys are provided to all eligible residents, providing translations, paper copies, and other modes of accessibility needed to make sure Burlington has as large and wide a sampling as possible.

**Recommendation:** Efforts will be made to raise the visibility of the Council and its efforts along with opportunities to raise the visibility and increase city-wide knowledge of the needs and concerns of Burlington's significant population of older residents, and the many ways in which they can be assets to the social and economic vitality of the city. This can include working with senior centers, schools, Fletcher Free Library, health providers, and other city departments and programs. In the future a regular communications plan will be developed.

**Recommendation:** Provide notice of the Council's monthly meetings and membership, with a link to the website, via Front Porch Forum (all Burlington Forums) each month.

### III. Priority Action Areas

Based on an understanding of areas in which significant state action was being taken the Council formed **three Topical Working Groups: Housing, Healthcare Workforce, and Social Inclusion and Mental Health**. With the assistance of a class of UVM Public Administration graduate students, under the supervision of Council member Glenn McRae, additional investigation will be carried out to cover:

- Recommendations for Communications Strategies most effective to engage and provide information out to Older Residents,
- Identifying strategies to eliminate barriers to older residents participating actively and fully in the local workforce,
- Provide a comprehensive look at transit and non-motorized mobility options best suited to enable and serve the needs and interests of older residents in Burlington,
- Conduct a rapid assessment of what has been developed in other communities, scalable to Burlington in racial equity and inclusion for older BIPOC residents, food security, civic engagement & social inclusion, and Family Caregiver Support

The efforts of the Council Working Groups and the UVM student projects will be compiled in May as part of a preliminary report to the City.

**Recommendation:** The Vermont State Plan on Aging will be monitored by Council members and alignment with these efforts will inform the Council action and recommendations.

**Recommendation:** For the Council and its working groups to be effective the volunteer member efforts need to be supported by sufficient resources. The Council requests:

- (a) Dedicated staffing, through an AmeriCorps position, a long term paid intern, or current staff person with sufficient time allocation to meet the Council's needs. While CEDO staffing has been extremely valuable in launching the Council we appreciate that these staff have significant other duties and responsibilities.
- (b) Dedicated funding for Council efforts (to be determined), recognizing that for outreach to be effective it does require both staffing and funds, whether fielding surveys, hosting focus groups, or printing materials. While some of this may be able to be coordinated with other City Departments (e.g., BED bill stuffers, Fletcher Free Library programs, Parks and Recreation events) that will also take more Council Staffing time.

### IV. Responsiveness and Reporting to City Council and the Mayor's Office

The Aging Council was established by City Council action in concert with the Mayor's Office. The Administration is regularly represented by CEDO designees serving on the Council. The Council will regularly communicate with and provide information and updates to City Council.

**Recommendation:** This spring invite Councilor’s to join either the regular or a special meeting of the Council in March (may include any newly elected Councilors) to receive an update on how the Council is proceeding and to provide their input on what they hope the Council can accomplish. Request advice on Council on an appropriate communication and reporting strategy.

**Recommendation:** Provide an invitation (notice) of each monthly meeting to City Council and the Mayor’s Office.

**V. Understand Specific Status of Age Friendly City Departments: Programs, Policies, Initiatives**

The City Government and its Departments will be models of age friendly practices in programs, policies, and initiatives.

**Recommendation:** Review the City budget to determine what specific allocation of resources are targeted to support older adults, and how sustained funding for the senior centers and age-specific programming, etc., can be institutionalized.

**Recommendation:** The Mayor requests each City Department to provide an inventory of programs, polices and initiatives currently underway or anticipated. Departments include:

- Board of Health
- Burlington Electric Department
- Church Street Marketplace
- City Arts
- Clerk/Treasurer's Office
- Community & Economic Development Office (CEDO)
- Fire Department
- Fletcher Free Library
- Human Resources Department
- Parks, Recreation & Waterfront Department
- Planning Office
- Police Department
- Public Works Department
- Racial Equity, Inclusion & Belonging Office

The requested information, as well as guidance and direction back to the Council, focuses on the key areas that the Council is charged with.

City of Burlington Age Friend Programs and Policies			
<i>Identifying current work and policies, and future plans to address the areas that City Council and the Mayor have establish for the Burlington Aging Council to investigate</i>			
<i>How are City Departments addressing any of these areas as they impact or support our older residents, particularly those 65+ years old?</i>	<b>Current Work</b>	<b>Planned or anticipated work</b>	<b>Department supporting State or other Partners to address</b>
Health Prevention, Access, & Quality: Nutrition & Physical Activity			
Food Security			
Social Inclusion			
Multimodal Transportation			
Accessible Outdoor & Indoor Public Spaces			
Housing: Affordability, Availability, & Accessibility			
Technology accessibility			
Civic Engagement and Volunteerism			
Industry (Employer) Support			
Family Caregiver Support			